2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

Men have begun to suffer the penalty of reckless exposure to mosquitoes, especially after nightfall in the valleys where *mavula* cider was drunk. Leaky huts and damp clothes have brought coughs, rheumatism and perhaps pneumonia. There is disease even among the cattle, which are attacked by the ticks that abound in the high grass. But these things cannot outweigh the pleasures of abundant relishes and summer fruits. April (*Thudimtoli*—the month when women ask you to help them lift (*hu vula*) the load from their heads) is indeed worthy of its name. Each afternoon the women come home with basketfuls of pumpkins, green mealies, nuts and relish. Careful housewives are drying relishes for winter while those whose weeding or mounding is up to date make tasty cakes of ground corn, monkey nuts, or the date-like fruits of the *muukhoma* tree (*Berchemia discolor*). The receptacles for storing have to be renewed for the reception of the new harvest, storage enclosures strengthened and sledges repaired. Men are to be seen daily going out to cut poles or grass, which the women carry home in enormous bundles on their heads. Soon reaping begins. The sesamum is first pulled up, then the groundnuts. Millet and kaffir corn are reaped next, lest the birds create too much havoc in the ripening fields; and, before this has ended, the mealies are garnered, stripped of their sheaths in the fields and carried home in baskets or on sledges. By the end of May, reaping and the threshing of kaffir corn and eleusine, usually done in prepared places in the fields, are in full swing. But in summer people do not, as in the planting season, work much in the mornings, except in working parties. Cooking is first finished and only after about eleven o'clock do the people go out to their fields. The men, especially those lucky enough to have no huts to renew or repair, have more leisure now, and there are daily orgies of beer-drinking. The abundance and variety of food make people forget that there might be a shortage later in the year, coming as a climax to reckless consumption and social activity. This is the time that people begin to compete in great friendly *gisha*-dancing displays and carry beer to relatives-in-law. Towards the end of July, when the herdboys turn the cattle to graze on the mealie stalks, there are echoing calls of joy, for soon they will not be herding at all. Grazing near home marks the beginning of the play-housekeeping of boys and girls in the reaped fields at the end of the season.

In contrast to the planting season, when the problem is to put in one's seeds betimes, reaping-time allows of a variety of other activities. From May, therefore, there are not only dances and much beer-drinking, but there is time for the plying of crafts, such as pottery, mat-making, basket-making. For the specialist in any craft is always primarily an agriculturalist who plies his craft only when he has time, and it is in vain that anyone approaches even the most skilled craftsman for an object during the planting or weeding season. Once the summer rains have stopped, courtyard walls are re-plastered and hut-building is possible. The period from August to the end of October when the fields are bare and the grass has dried is *madulahae* ('the time of sitting at home'), three months of leisure so dear to the Lovedu. Though many people are still winding up the work of the year, building and thatching, threshing and

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

some day reciprocate and the old man again 'thanks' him with beer given in his honour. And this is an essential aspect of these gift exchanges. The most striking illustration is in respect of *munywalo* (bride-price). The *tuzi*, it is said, never completes *munywalo* payments (*munywalo a u ftle*); even in his old age he must still respond to the call for assistance from his relatives-in-law; and they in turn never cease bringing him beer. But whatever he gives falls into the *munywalo* and must be returned should the marriage be dissolved; the chain linking the parties into relations of reciprocity has snapped.

The *gɔsha*, essentially a dance performed by the young men of one or more areas, provides the setting of an interesting interchange of goodwill and of commodities. The main object is undoubtedly recreational, and the main participators are not kin, but members of a territorial unit. The district head is not necessarily involved, except as far as he must know what goes on in his district. The old Lovedu word *lucbo*, a musical entertainment, emphasizes its salient features: youths, blowing on reed flutes, dance round in a circle to the accompaniment of four drums beaten by girls. There is much preliminary practising under the leadership of the dance-master (*malogwani*), but in the actual performances leadership is not marked and changes continually as one performer after the other takes his stand in the centre of the ring of dancers. The artistic aspect, the making of the sets of reeds, their tone compass, the rhythmic counterpoints and the various melodic and harmonic sequences of sound may be dismissed in a sentence: close by, one is reminded of the pealing of bells thrown into ever new combinations by complex steps and movements; at a distance one listens as if to an *ensemble* of brass instruments strongly supported by drums. We are concerned with the socio-economic aspects only.

A slight comparison with the Venda *matangwa*, a word also used by the Lovedu (*matagwa*), is instructive. A Venda creditor wishing to collect a debt calls the dancers, gives them some work (such as the building of a hut or the repairing of a fence), and sends them to the recalcitrant debtor. There they stay feeding at the expense of the debtor and of his neighbours until the debtor pays. But the beast that the debtor pays is slaughtered and consumed by the performers, the creditor receiving only a small part. Apart from using the *matangwa* to enforce payment by debtors, the Venda also send such dancers to express sympathy when there has been a death and in that case there is a return visit to get back the beast slaughtered. It has also other uses not relevant to our present purpose.

Among the Lovedu the *gɔsha* is somewhat different. Private individuals send it to friends or relatives to express sympathy or to notify a death as well as to celebrate the occasion of the latter's marriage or setting up a new home; and there are special rules for each kind of *gɔsha*. The *gɔsha* of condolence, for instance, lasts one day, drums are not allowed if the deceased is of a foreign tribe, and refusal of the entertainment is impossible. Generally speaking, a *gɔsha* entails special food and lodging arrangements, food for the visitors being collected from households in the district which also provides sleeping quarters. The old rules designed

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

to prevent promiscuity among young boys and girls are no longer in evidence, and complications are liable to arise where there is a *gisha*. The economic aspect of the *gisha*, except where it originates in a visit of condolence or is sent to supplicate for rain, is that the host, whether he himself originally invited the dancers or not, may send back a 'revenge' *gisha* to get back the beast he killed for the performers. He gets back very little, only the *manamo*, perhaps a leg of the beast, and the performers do not work for him to compensate him for what they have eaten. The *gisha* is not conceived of as a debt-collecting institution, it never originates in a debt, and once it is set into motion, its real function is to maintain reciprocal relations. A man may start the chain of reciprocity by inviting a *gisha* from elsewhere; on the other hand, a party of dancers out for merriment sometimes descend upon any one they like, but he may refuse the entertainment as too costly or for other reasons. To notify the host that a *gisha* is coming is usual; but a man whose *gisha* has been accepted by another may stop (*ku thiva*) the latter from returning the compliment (and getting back his beast) by sending *khirula* beer; he will do so, for instance, when he has no beast to kill or is reluctant to part with one.

The *gisha* may be a cumbrous instrument to effect exchanges of commodities, but it throws the social concomitants of these exchanges boldly into relief, magnifying them to such an extent that the gift exchange is completely obscured. This is in accordance with Lovedu conceptions, for they have a great dislike of anything that is clearly and primarily a commercial transaction. The *gisha* stresses the interchange of goodwill; the guests, drawn perhaps from three or four areas, come to display their skill for the delectation of their hosts; and the latter, hurriedly collecting their dancers, come forth with their drummers and *ensemble* of flute-players to challenge their guests. First the one party, then the next give their performances; it is a social gala occasion and the competition is carried on in the friendliest spirit. The spectators are the judges: an old man passing gives his verdict, perhaps after having heard only one set of performers; an old woman, after a dance of ecstasy (*ku pekela*), sets the crown, be it merely a leg-ring or necklace, upon the head of her favourite performer; and when the next party dances, the verdicts are reversed and the honours paid anew. In the end neither party is victor or vanquished. The object has been self-expression, without stress upon individual performance, and entertainment in which the competitive element is present merely to heighten the enjoyment. The boys and girls of the competing areas intermingle and there are many lovers' intrigues; the girls give their favourites cloths to wear as if they were knights; it is truly an occasion for the renewal of the ties of friendship, ties between relatives and ties between districts. The reciprocity is generally at long range, for distant districts are brought into relationship. Resting upon a relationship between two individuals, it draws into its sphere, through the dancing, food, and sleeping arrangements, whole territorial units.

The most impressive of all the gift exchanges, however, involves the two groups of people between whom, by reason of a marriage, brides are exchanged against cattle (*munywalo*). This exchange is as far

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

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VII. ADOLESCENCE

(*a*) REALISTIC PLAY-COOKING IN THE MANDWANE

(*b*) A TROUPE OF YOUTHFUL DANCERS

[facing p. 112]

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

a hole is hollowed out so as to be deep enough for her to sit in (if possible the water should reach the neck) while a fire is kindled for the other girls, at whose pleasure she remains in the water, uttering her wail. If the girl has a good friend among the old women, she may free the initiate from going to the river after the first morning by a gift of snuff to the elder girls. This is called 'lifting the weight' from the girl (*ku rula*). They return home about eleven o'clock in the morning, when they have their meal. After this the elder girls return to their homes or do as they please, while the novice and her friend remain in their hut. They sleep if they can, for at night they get little chance to do so. During the initiation the girl undergoes harsh treatment at the hands of the older girls. She 'pays', by being beaten, for going to sleep, for waking up and on the slightest pretext. At night her blankets are taken away and used by the older girls, while she lies exposed with no fire to warm her. Not only is she allowed no relish with her porridge, but she may also be given filth to eat. One girl's menstrual blood was put in her porridge, which she immediately vomited up; sometimes a frog is given them to eat and one of us has seen initiates made to eat sand as relish. If she asks for water, the elder girls may clear the nose into it before it is given. All this harsh treatment is looked upon as good discipline.

Initiation at puberty includes instruction in rules connected with the new stage of life the girl is entering upon. She is warned that she has reached maturity and must be careful, in sex play with boys, to avoid becoming pregnant. She is advised also not to have more than one lover at a time, lest there be difficulty in establishing the paternity of her child should she have one. In the old days she was at this stage given a calabash doll which at her marriage was carried in a basket by the wedding party. If she was not virgin, the calabash was pierced. This custom has, however, fallen into disuse. The girl is taught the rules connected with menstruation: not to enter a sick-room while menstruating, not to enter a cattle kraal, not to sleep with men during her menses. If she has not enlarged her *labia minora* properly, she is severely scolded or punished by having hot, roasted sesamum put on them. In one case the elder girls inserted a mealie cob in an initiate to show her the dangers of intercourse, hurting her so badly that she was unable to walk properly. Her parents complained to the queen, who imposed a heavy fine on each of the elder girls responsible. There is no teaching connected with marriage. An initiate must be respectful to her elders: she is told that if people older than herself are in a hut she must greet (*lɔsha*) on entering. She is taught in a song to honour and obey her mother. Most of the teaching is in the form of songs or mummeries. The dancing that takes place every night when the women come consists largely of movements in a bent position on the haunches, with arms held above the head for better balance. Some of the dances are associated with the lessons of the initiation: two girls, one with a cloth passed between the legs to represent the loin covering of a man, dance facing each other; the 'man' dances with a lighted fire-brand between the legs, the girl wears a cloth which makes her look pregnant. Another dance consists of movements in which legs are held close together, and sometimes crossed, symbolic of the manner in which

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

535 male advances can be prevented from becoming dangerous. These are *digɔma*, secret things or mummeries.

The last night of the ceremony is devoted to dancing and the showing of many *digɔma*. It is *khilalawemi*, the night when one sleeps standing—that is, does not sleep at all, though, since people just take a nap any time they feel tired, the name is somewhat exaggerated. All the women of the area who wish to attend gather either in the village, from which men will be debarred, or at a secluded spot somewhere near, bringing with them mealies and nuts to roast and eat while there. There is a great deal of dancing and singing. The greatest *digɔma* are shown at about 3 a.m., after a period of comparative quiet that sets in towards midnight, when most of the people begin to doze around the fires, and these continue until dawn, when disguised figures come dancing in. Each mummery has its own meaning, but this is not clear to the initiate, who does not even see many of them. In the morning, while the girls are at the [302] river, the hut of seclusion is swept and freshly smeared. On her return, after having her head shaved along the sides and back, leaving a circular top, which is a form of hairdress much liked by girls and associated with ritual occasions, the girl is anointed with fat and, except when she is of the royal family, also with ochre. [292] She is given three skins to wear, a frontal covering, a rear covering, and a skin to wear over the shoulders like a cloak. Round her neck is a thick collarette of beads. When dressed, the girl has respectfully to salute the assembled company of women in the courtyard by lying down on one side, palms held together. Now follows a few days during which the novice speaks to no one and walks with bent head, fists clenched and held to the breast. She is taken by the [431] elder girls to greet various relations, who must *nosa* her by means of a small gift before she can rise. A month or more after the ceremony a grand beer-party is given by the girl's parents for the women of the area, [571] who, at a spot near which men are not allowed, have a dance of *digɔma*, specially disguised figures. When the novice has been through the requisite number of ceremonies, she is taken to the queen or the wife of the district head to be beaten with a stick as a sign of her graduation.

881 Boys' initiation (*vudiga*) is much more spectacular than the *khɔba*. Typically it is held by the whole tribe every twelve to fifteen years, but some district heads occasionally do not wait for the authority of the queen. The last *vudiga* upon a national scale was in 1919, but since then there have been local lodges, such as the one held by the district head Maunadala in 1937. The interval of more than twenty years is not considered extraordinary. Sometimes in the past there were delays, especially in the latter half of the reigns of queens, because, so it is said, they wished to postpone their ritual end, which coincided with the fourth initiation after their accession. In 1938–9 the *vyali*, or girls' initiation, was revived after thirty-five years, partly as a preliminary to the next boys' initiation; and if within a year or so there is a *vudiga*, it will be the third of a reign that has already lasted forty-three years. There are other reasons for the present delay. The *vudiga* involves an immense organization, brings all public activities, such as the courts, to a standstill, upsets the economic routine, and concentrates energies upon one supreme

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

881 they sleep by the 'mother' of the lodge (*maɖala*) near the fire. Those a little older set their traps and catch mice, which they roast by the *khisibe* fire; but relish and wild fruit is usually forbidden to them and they may not, though they often do, drink water. Sick boys, elsewhere subjected to hardships and taunts, are nursed and given soft food, not the hard *khivondlo* of the novices. The novices who go out to hunt certainly resent the malingering of the lazy ones (*maɡɔtha*), who are strong enough, but stay at home on this or that pretext. But the true spirit of the *vudiga* is seen, not so much in the beatings that the shepherds (*medabi*) administer, for they are beaten as much as if not more than, the novices, but in the actions and attitude of the older men. There are *medidi*, one regiment senior to the *medabi*, who are never beaten, but may be fined; and older than they are the old men (*vakhalabye*). They are kindly greybeards, some of them officials of the lodge and some who do no work (*vuɾaliziɖ*). Some of them constantly intercede for the young and weak boys who are threatened with punishment or trials beyond their strength or endurance, or 'stand for' those deserving novices who had been obedient or generous or respectful in their childhood. Above all, these old men, mellow with age and mature in wisdom, conditioned to a culture founded upon compromise and easy relations, not only restrain excesses, but add to the beauty of the performances by chanting their refrain of sayings and proverbs, encouragements and admonitions. It is they, not the shepherds with their whips, that give the tone to the proceedings.

The stage after this period of seclusion is called the 'change' (*hu fedultiwa*). The boys sit by the fire facing the rising, not the setting, sun, as was the case in the previous three months. Of course, we must not expect precision: the 1919 fire ran north-south, not east-west; the ideal always gives way to the practical, for the east-west disposition was rendered difficult, though not impossible, by the slope of the ground. In other respects also it was the spirit not the letter of the law that determined various arrangements. After the 'change' life is somewhat different in the lodge. The boys used to do homage (*lɔsha*) to a *morula* tree near the fire as if it were their ancestor (grandparent). But the tree
[778] mysteriously withers and, after the change, is replaced by a pole (*murakadu*). No teaching is done from either tree or pole as is the case in other tribes, but it is associated with a whole series of ritual acts. After the 'change' no longer shepherds but women bring the food; boys perform within sight of women; some of the food taboos are raised, but
[262] relish, though always brought, is forbidden and still thrown into the refuse heap. Apart from these and many other changes, we must also mention the visit by the novices to the village in order to 'beg for salt'. Then they sing the praises of salt, the seasoning virtues of which they now fully appreciate, having gone without it for so long. But on their return the pole has gone; their grandparent has died.

● [535] And now we press on to a day of great doings. The novices go out to 'scratch [as fowls do] for food', only this means a spectacular dance before the women. That night, the last night in the lodge, it is *khilalawemi*, the night of standing, though many quietly doze off or escape to rest in the bush near by; there is none of the concentration we expect on

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

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IX. MASKED DANCERS OF RAVOTHATA

[facing p 128]

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

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X. MASQUERADE OF THE UUAHWERA

(*a*) STRUTTING OF THE UUAHWERA DANCE

(*b*) DANCE OF THE DUIKER

[facing P. 129]

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

881 of feathers to shade the head girl. After much dancing, cloths are tied round the initiates in the manner common to the possessed. This ceremony foreshadows the end of the initiation and indicates to the whole country that it is drawing to a close. The last month is devoted to
881 dancing: every area that is holding a *oyali* sends its initiates to dance
●535 before the queen, some coming with *vuhwera*, others without. Last of
778 all come the people of Ravothata with the *magɔgɔbya* and it is their performance that closes the 'school'. The *magɔgɔbya* have more imposing
[292] costumes even than the *vuhwera*, characterized by the stuffed baboon and duiker that surmount them. After a number of important *digɔma* have been shown, there is a grand finale one night (*khilalawemi*), when the Bird hangs its head sideways and says, 'My head aches and I know my end has come.' A *gɔma* of the women, the Butterfly (*khiruruwele*), dressed in leaves, comes dancing in at the girls' entrance to tease and chase the Bird. Before sunrise, when the Bird has returned to its hut, some of the initiates (those who have come for a short time only) may be taken to 'touch the Bird', a terrible ordeal. Then next morning they are all taken to the river, where they are shaved and given new clothes to wear. They are now 'things from the rubbish heap' (*zwigwamathukhu*), like boys after circumcision: they walk in a bent position, may not speak freely, receive gifts, and at night ask riddles (*dinyebo*) specially associated with initiations. The enclosures are burnt. After a final washing in the river the initiates return to ordinary life and activities. A small operation is performed on initiates at the river on the last day. Among some tribes
[304] it consists of defloration, but among the Lovedu it is said to consist of a cut above the clitoris which is so small that it causes no pain or inconvenience.

881 At the time when the initiates make preparations for the arrival
292 of the Bird (February–March), the boys of those areas that have the
535 *vuhwera* as well are taken out into the bush every day to learn how to weave the elaborate costumes associated with this initiation. These are of two types: a light one, said to be for hunting, and a heavy one. Both costumes have skirts of loose-hanging grass, flung out in a circle by the gyrations of the dancer, as well as comely waist, arm, and leg bands and under-skirts of woven grass. The light costume has in addition broad shoulder bands crossing over chest and back and a mask resting upon the shoulders, veiling the face and open at the top. The heavy costume is far more imposing. Besides a woven waistcoat, there is an immense covering for head and shoulders, rising to a crested summit, flanked by what gives the impression of scales arranged in rows or projecting wings, and fronted by a snout like that of a crocodile. The dance reminds one, now of the prancings of a male bird courting its mate, now of a lizard convulsively shaking its whole body as it rests upon a rock. The lizard-bird suggests a weird dragon-like mythical monster, but its appearance belies its functions and qualities, though perhaps not the mystical meaning of the *digɔma* of the 'school'.

[778] The enclosure for *vuhwera* boys is made beside that for the Bird. Here, after having being beaten with medicated sticks, the boys spend their time, except when out hunting or dancing, their food being brought to

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

the *vyali* courtyard by their sisters. They are taught a few 'laws' or formulae associated with the *vuhwera*, but their main activities are learning to make the elaborately woven costumes and later to dance in the *vyali* courtyard. Towards the end of the initiation they spend most of their time going about to dance, accepting invitations from other district heads and paying their respects at the royal village. They do beautiful movements to the drumming of their own *vyali* girls. Only two dance at a time and, while they dance, attendants (*medabi*) stand near by supervising. The masked boys may whistle out the tune to which they wish to dance or may beg snuff by means of whistling (for this is their only means of conversation during their initiation). When they dance well, women and girls come to give them gifts of leg- or arm-rings. The *vuhwera* is a kind of finishing school, an initiation into the secret of what the Bird is and how the costumes are made. It is almost as though this is an esoteric art, the preservation of which has become the main function of the *vuhwera*. A person who enters the *vuhwera* enclosure may be required to display his skill at weaving and in 1939 a man who was unable to weave (and thus showed himself to be uninitiated) was heavily fined. The fact that there is no *vuhwera* held at the royal kraal, whose boys used in the old days to go for this initiation to Khada or to the *Tzaneni*, a section of the Khada, suggests that the institution is a more recent adoption than the *vyali*.

It is not easy for a European to appreciate the meaning and value of such institutions as *vyali* and *vuhwera*. Most of their features cannot be explained by the Lovedu themselves. They are the result of a long, historical development which, in the absence of all evidence, may never be unravelled. The *vyali* has many aspects. One of the most important is that of a crossing or initiation similar to circumcision. The initiates are often called *vawedi* (crossers) and initiation may be referred to as 'to cross over' (*hu u:la*). It is conceived as a period of hardship, a crossing for which medical treatment and ancestral blessings are essential. Respect for those older than oneself is emphasized: the initiates must be humble; but older people, especially the old men who remain in the Bird's enclosure, live royally on the beer and delicacies brought daily by initiates. There is emphasis, too, on the importance of the rank of district heads and chief, and the learning of praises of all the areas, followed towards the end of the initiation by inter-district visits, is an important feature.

Intermingled with and overshadowing the *vyali* as an initiation is the *vyali* as a fertility and rain cult, related to the *gomana* drum cult and serving the same purpose. The *vyali* lasts a year, a full agricultural cycle, and some of its stages are associated with the seasons: the typical *vyali* dress of the girls cannot be plaited till the grass has grown long; the Bird arrives only when there is plenty of food. The singing of *vyali* songs is believed to bring rain. Even before the rains of the summer of 1938–9 had fallen, it was said in Ulovedu that the year would be one of plenty on account of the *vyali*. These expectations were more than realized, for not only was the summer rainy, but even the winter, which is normally dry, was exceptionally wet. Stress is laid in the *vyali* on grass and vegetation: the girls wear plaited bandoliers of grass which are said by

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

241 782 where they will pour and to carry the beer in the *khirudwana* basket used in honour of the gods. The occasion is one of joy. The women have already in all likelihood sung *lesugu* songs special to the occasion amid joyous trillings while preparing the beer and, since in addition to the special beer of the gods much ordinary beer will have been prepared, a wide circle of relatives, including those of the wives, will have been invited.

When the queen held her *thugula* ceremony in August, 1938, Didi was despatched at eight o'clock in the morning to fetch home Magovo, the cow dedicated to the queen's mother, for the harvest giving should take place fairly early in the day, though in practice the rule is often observed in the breach and we have seen ceremonies take place after midday. As it is not easy to drive home one cow of a herd, all were driven and put into the *khɔrɔ* where every one had gathered. When Magovo's hind legs had been tied, the chief wife of Mulogwane, deceased brother of the chief to whose family the queen is *khadi*, appeared carrying in a basket a calabash of beer and the queen's mother's beads (*mudala*, the well-known 'beads of the water'). Pouring some of the beer in a wooden platter, she handed it to the queen, who, holding the beads in her hands, placed it before Magovo with the words, 'Here is beer, Magovo of Muhale (one of the earliest kings), beer of the new corn. We say, Stop this epidemic (winds) to which you have exposed us. Here, too, are your beads. We see neither people (subjects) nor riches; we see only that poverty which you have left for us.' The cow sipped a little of the beer, whereupon all prostrated themselves in greeting (*hu lɔsha*), while one or two women rent the air with their joyous trillings. Sometimes (but it was omitted on this occasion) the beads are placed round the neck of the cow and left there for the whole day.

The dedicated cow having been untied, all now repaired to the courtyard of the chief wife of Mulogwane, where they sat round the shrine, the queen and sons and daughters near by, wives further away, while the small children were made to kneel on the lower side of the shrine, hands together and palms up. Pouring out beer on the mound, the queen said a prayer similar to the previous one, adding that the gods must tell one another and not leave any one out. Then, drinking a little herself, she placed the calabash on the ground for the next person to take up and drink. Each one in turn placed the gourd on the ground for the next to take up, till all the relatives had drunk, when it was returned to the queen. She drank once more, saying, 'He who gives to the gods must not remain hungry,' and laid the calabash upside down on the mound. The small children lapped up the beer from the ground, and trilling and *hu lɔsha* marked the end of the ceremony.

241 782 533 535 Now pots of beer for the crowd that had gathered were brought out and general drinking began. After a while the men took out the drums and began dancing an old dance, the *matagwa*. Thereafter the women began the sacred *lesugu* songs, to which men and women danced in a ring in the courtyard of the chief wife. The queen herself beat the big drum. It was now near sunset. Suddenly a wail like the bleating of a sheep was heard; another, then another, in the direction of the bush behind the

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

village. It was the *zwidajani*, ancestral spirits come to join in the joy and revelry of the living. They opened the next song and joined in the singing of the women, all in the whistling language which people make out by its tone. Later more beer was brought out and when the *zwidajani* began a new song no one took any notice. 'If you are drinking beer, what are we to drink', came the wails of the *zwidajani* and a pot of beer was brought to the bush by councillors. Dancing and singing continued till the small hours of the morning, when the sounds of the *zwidajani* disappeared in the direction of Maulwi, the burial grove of the dead queens, and the revellers, happy and drunk from beer of the *thugula*, retired to bed. The spirits visit only important members of the royal group and a few other families, but beyond this there are no differences between the harvest giving of the queen and that of other people.

Ritual killings of all kinds are insignificant by contrast with the beer offering. There are, first, killings specially for the ancestors, but they are so rare that many people have never seen them. Secondly, there are occasions when the killings, clearly ritual, are not thought of as an offering or sacrifice, because nothing is given to the ancestors. And, thirdly, there are killings, not associated with ancestors or religion, in which small pieces of meat may nevertheless be set aside to 'tell' (*hu suma*) the gods of some event or to propitiate them. *Hu suma* is a conception somewhat different from our 'offer' or 'give'; it has two connotations as used in ordinary life: it is either merely to inform a superior or, by extension of this idea, to send him a share of something good one has, such as a leg of an animal slaughtered or a calabash of the beer one has brewed. In approaching the gods, sometimes one and sometimes the other conception is uppermost.

The killing which most clearly contains the conception of an offering and the primary purpose of which is propitiation of the gods is the slaughter of a black sheep for rain at the grave of a royal ancestor: the victim is immolated, small pieces of meat cut from all parts of it are set aside for the gods, and all the bones are collected and buried in the grave, together with the stomach contents. Equally stressed, however, is the eating of the meat without salt by the assembled crowd. At the installation of a district head, a beast, referred to as a *thugula*, is killed and, in so far as it is killed in a special manner and morsels of meat set aside for the gods to be cooked and later eaten without salt by children below the age of puberty, it is the vicarious submission of a gift to the ancestors. But the major portion of meat is not ritually eaten nor are the bones collected, for a hind leg is sent to the queen. So little is the 'goat of killing' in marriage ceremonial regarded as an offering or sacrifice that we sought for it in vain in the context of a killing for the ancestors. Yet pieces of meat are laid on the shrine and a prayer offered, though the rest of the meat is not ritually eaten nor are the bones kept. Still further removed from an offering is the goat killed on a death to provide a skin for covering the body: its meat is eaten without salt, and all who partake of it must sleep in the hut of the deceased, but nothing is given to the ancestors and no prayer is offered. On the other hand, though the *lelɔpɔ* doctor, when killing a goat to treat a patient, sets aside pieces of meat

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

782 for his ancestors, this killing, primarily medical in purpose, is not to propitiate and has no religious significance.

An interesting though unusual killing among the Lovedu is the 'bringing home' of a spirit. Maborɔmɔ, an uninitiated widow living with her three children in a village of relatives, had had much illness in the family which, after consultation with many doctors, was attributed to her husband's brother Pheduli. Pheduli had been stabbed to death in a Johannesburg compound and was now complaining, 'I want to be brought home with a head of cattle.' All his relatives were asked to be present and contribute their share of corn, because 'We are placing a beast to be Pheduli'. On the day of the ceremony a young black and white bull-calf was caught and held, and, when beer (*muphɔ̀ɔa*) was poured down its throat, the *khadi* uttered a prayer, saying, 'Drink and tell all the other spirits these matters.' Then they repaired with the same calabash to the courtyard, where all the children were called to sit near: the *khadi*, praying for health, poured the beer on a spear, battle-axe, and horn which had belonged to Pheduli, and the children drank what was left in the calabash, each one placing it in turn on the ground. The doctor, who, supervising his side of the ceremony, had been busy in a hut preparing his medicines, now came out and asked that the dedicated calf again be caught. Mixing a powder, said to consist of *mufɛra* and other medicines to make spirits forget, he told the *khadi* to smear it on some of the hairs at the end of the tail and to tie a knot. He himself then smeared the whole tail and body. Repairing to the courtyard where the *thugula* objects still lay, the doctor took out a bag of powder, which he shook up to 'smoke' the objects in its dust. Then he dug a hole where the beer had been poured.

Meanwhile the meat of a goat which had been killed was cooking in a pot. Before the killing (which we did not witness), medicine, we were told, had been smeared on the goat while the doctor uttered the words, 'Sleep, sleep here, and look after your people.' The meat was eaten without salt by the relatives as well as a few others who were present and the bones carefully collected. A dog seized hold of one and was chased by all till the bone was retrieved. Having placed the bones in the hole, the doctor inquired, 'In which direction do the Lovedu look when buried?' The *khadi* pointed to the north. Then, taking the head of the goat, he placed it facing north on top of the bones and said, 'We people all look in that direction.' He took out medicine, which he gave to the *khadi* to pour on the bones, smoked them with his powder, and ordered that the hole be filled with the stomach contents mixed with earth. The *khadi* then beat down the earth and made a small mound. Dancing and the singing of *lesugu* songs now began and continued all night till at dawn the *khadi* took some water and squirted (*hu phasa*) thrice, saying, 'As for us, we are going, we are returning home. And you, may you remain in peace.' In the beer that was provided for this festive occasion was put some medicine, 'the powder of death', generally used after a death, lest people *khuma*; for the burial of the goat symbolizes the burial and bringing home of their ancestor, just as the dedicated goat symbolizes the immortality of his spirit.

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

771 The form in which it is found is different from that among Shangana-
794 Tonga and lent itself to ready incorporation into Lovedu religion.
177 Among Shangana-Tonga, the possessing spirit is regarded as a foreign spirit from some outside tribe; among the Lovedu it is an ancestor who may, like any ancestor, demand the usual shrine or dedicated animal. The cult is not accepted by all and the royal family deprecate it as foreign and as detracting from their prestige. Its noisiness and showiness, though incongruous with the traditional reserve and lack of display, makes a popular appeal in these more insecure days.

794 A spirit entering a person causes illness and the first object of the cult
753 is directed at curing the illness, so that initiation is regarded as therapeutic. Long-continued illness of a patient, which will yield to no curative treatment, will be diagnosed as due to an ancestral spirit 'pressing him down', because it wants to manifest itself in him. The symptoms are never very definite: Mashishimali was 'ill all over the body' and suffered from swollen legs which five different doctors had tried unsuccessfully to cure; Mamolatela was weak and ailing after the birth of her first child. The symptoms are neither violent, like the running amuck which accompanies *ukuthwasa* among the Nguni, nor of a specifically nervous nature.
[828] Epilepsy, which is common, bears no relation to possession, and any peculiar behaviour is more liable to be attributed to witchcraft than to the spirits. It is believed that a possessed person after death likes in turn to manifest itself in some descendant and there is a tendency for possession to run in families. In one family three sisters and their mother were all possessed. Sometimes, especially when others in the family are possessed, a person does not even get ill; he just becomes possessed when people are singing or dancing in the manner of the cult. Contact with certain localities or people associated with possession is often sufficient. Thus it is said that, should one be among the Sekhwasha in Portuguese East Africa, who become possessed in a manner different from the Lovedu, one risks becoming possessed by merely picking up something dropped by a member of that tribe or eating the fruit of the fig, *mudomma* (*Diospyros mespiliformis*), or *munchchchc* (*Cassia petersiana*).

794 Once it is known that a person is being 'pressed down' by some spirit
755 wishing to manifest itself, a *lelɔpo* doctor, himself possessed and skilled in dealing with the possessed, is called to cure the patient. This is done, not by exorcism, but by rites designed to enable the spirit to come and make known its wishes along legitimate channels, known as the cult. For the spirits that possess people are not evil spirits to be expelled; they are the ancestors whom one worships, and their desire occasionally to manifest themselves through some living relative is comparable to that impulse towards life that makes them desire shrines, dedicated animals, and the perpetuation of their names in their descendants. The method by which a spirit is enabled to 'come out' and disclose its identity and the possessed person to become the host (*ledala*) of the spirit without being ill consists largely of dancing; and on all subsequent occasions when the
794 spirits manifest themselves they signify their desire to dance.

785 Dancing is the central feature of the cult. The spirits are thought to
535 enjoy this dancing; when manifesting themselves at festivities of the

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

possessed, they often say they have come to 'play' with the others and they may even cause slight ill-health on this account. Hence quite often when a possessed person does not feel well, he will ask for the drums, saying he must dance. *Lelɔpɔ* dancing consists of fast movements of the foot to the accompaniment of drums or tambourines and rattles. At a seance of *malɔpɔ a zwikwe*, those who speak *Thɔvɔlɔ*, the large hemispherical *gɔma* drum is used in addition to the conical drums. All are, however, beaten with the hands, the elbows being placed on the drumskin in a peculiar manner. *Malɔpɔ*, who speak Sotho or Lovedu, use only the conical drums in the ordinary manner.

If the dance has a great fascination—after a seance one finds even small children practising the steps—the dress worn by the possessed adds to the attraction. Cloths of different colours are worn round the waist and tied at the back; round the legs are usually leggings of the outer shell of the *dituzi* (*Oncoba spinosa*) fruit filled with pebbles to rattle as one dances; on the head is a cap of fur or brightly coloured wool or a head-gear of black feathers, while very often a spear, battle-axe, or stick is brandished in the hand. These are the *zwithamo* of the spirit, worn only during possession. The nature of the dress of each possessed person has been indicated by the spirit itself, and people do their best to comply, lest the possessed person dies. Once at a seance the spirit of a woman asked that a beast or, failing that, a goat be 'placed' for him. 'We'll do our best,' the relatives replied, 'but remember we are poor and it is a matter that will take time.' The spirit, angry at this unwillingness, retorted, 'If you don't comply, I'll take away my person [in whom I manifest myself] and go and sleep with her. Tell Makhade (elder brother of the possessed who learnt the profession of doctor from the spirit) I'll take away my profession from him.' 'We'll do our best,' urged the relatives, 'but don't go away in anger.' In spite of this power, possessing spirits have nevertheless to take cognizance of public opinion and the desires of royalty. The spirit of the wife of a royal relative asked for a man's loin-cloth, which women possessed by male spirits occasionally wear, but he refused to allow it on the grounds that for a woman to wear man's attire is unbecoming. An old woman therefore addressed the spirit, saying, 'People here don't like it,' and the spirit was satisfied.

A short description of an institution which contains all the elements of an ordinary seance must suffice to illustrate some of the main features of the cult. When the doctor, called to conduct the initiation, has arrived with his or her attendants, drums are fetched from the district head, and other disciples of the doctor invited to be present. Nothing can, however, be done before the spirit of the doctor descends upon her. To allow this, they retire to a hut and lie down as if to sleep, while an old woman puts down some pinches of snuff on the ground and calls upon the spirits to come. In a few minutes the doctor groans and quivers and the spirit signifies its arrival by a song of greeting. It calls for its *lelɔpɔ* clothes and the doctor is dressed. Soon the spirits of her attendants also arrive and treatment, which consists in making the novitiate dance, is begun.

When Betty was being initiated, we arrived early one Saturday evening, attracted by the noise, to find a picturesque scene. It was winter and

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

794 five little fires had been lit in the vicinity of the courtyard of Betty's hut.
755 In the centre were three women dancing to the music of drums and
535 rattles. We sat down by the nearest fire and found ourselves with a group
786 of old women. For people had arranged themselves, naturally as is their manner, in age-groups round the various fires; young married women at one, small boys at another, girls above the age of puberty at a third. The dust rose high; what had sounded pleasant enough at a distance became, as one sat in its midst, an almost unbearable din; while in the flickering and uncertain light of the fires the dancing took on a frenzied effect that lent to the scene a wildness and weirdness seldom met with except in travellers' tales of darkest Africa. Never again in our frequent attendances at *malɔpɔ* dancing did we recapture that first sense of weirdness so largely due to its novelty and our own ignorance. That night the dancing stopped at 1.30 a.m. but by dawn it had begun again, continuing with intervals of rest during the whole of Sunday and Sunday night. Betty danced most of the time; if she rested too long, the women urged her on, saying, 'How do you expect the spirit to come out if you don't dance?' All this time she was being treated with medicines: black powder mixed with butter fat was smeared on her legs, white froth of medicine churned with a porridge stirrer was applied on various parts of the body, some being administered also internally, and infusions were given her to drink. No food was eaten either by Betty or by the women whose spirits were upon them; the very sight of porridge makes some *malɔpɔ* vomit and the only sustenance allowed while dancing is beer, if there happens to be any.

Late on Sunday afternoon they called her mother's brother to try to induce the spirit to manifest itself, for doctors had indicated that the troubling spirit was on the mother's side. Taking a calabash of water in his hand, the mother's brother knelt near the dancing girl and spat mouthfuls of water out on the ground, saying, 'Come out, spirit, that this person also may be well. She remains ailing, and when we go to doctors they tell us it is a spirit. Come outside that this person can be well [cool].' Sometimes, instead of *hu phasa* with water, mixed grains of all kinds are thrown over the dancer and the words used are, 'We are giving you everything to come.' It may even be that something, which can be overcome only by magical means, is holding back the spirit, as when, on one occasion, the spirit was said to be bewildered at the cross-roads, not knowing which to take. All the roads except that leading into the village were magically 'barred' and the spirit, thus guided, came straight in and manifested itself. Difficult as it is for a spirit to come on the first occasion, once initiation has taken place, it becomes a simple matter. To make a spirit manifest itself, a person has only to dance in the manner of the cult or to lie down while some one calls on it to come. The spirit may also come of its own accord at any time without being induced.

794 Early on the Monday morning Betty, showing signs of exhaustion,
755 began to stagger in her dancing, and people knew the spirit must be near. Her movements became more frenzied, she put up her hands to her head and dragged her feet uncertainly, and then fell to the ground. Several women who had been expecting this, caught and carried her, still quivering and groaning, into the hut. 'Good day, grandparent. Come nicely,

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

grandparent,' they kept saying. After a few moments Betty began a song, 794
one usually sung on the arrival of a spirit, giving the name of the spirit 755
upon her—namely, Mamaile, her mother's mother. Those present sang the refrain to the accompaniment of rattles. Staggerings and fallings, groanings or growlings are always signs of an approaching spirit; sometimes the possessed person runs away for a short distance. A goat was now brought into the hut. Its body was smeared with medicine, some was poured down its throat and, after the patient had breathed hard into its mouth, it was taken out and killed. Under supervision of the doctor, small pieces were cut from all parts and placed in a bowl, while the stomach contents and portion of the liver were set aside to be used in curing the patient. The experts say that the sickness from which the ancestor suffered before its death and which presumably causes the patient to suffer, goes into the goat. Before proceeding further, the doctor took the bowl of meat to the hut entrance, where, after setting aside half of it, she placed it with a little snuff on the ground, praying to her spirit. Later this meat was roasted and eaten by small boys. The stomach contents were smeared on various parts of the body of the patient; the small pieces of meat were roasted, mixed with a black powder, and administered on the end of a stick to all four of the possessed people present.

The doctor now busied herself charring chips of various kinds of bark in a basin in which some of the goat's liver had also been put. With this the patient was smoked three times under a blanket till she coughed and spluttered. This took a considerable time, during which the other possessed women sang songs in turn. Mabelowa, who is possessed by a man, called for her pipe in which some hemp was put and evinced great astonishment when her fellow wife, her attendant when she is possessed, struck a match to light it. This was a European innovation unknown in the days of her spirit. Similarly, when a potato was brought, all the possessed women examined it with wonder, asking each other whether it was edible. While the meat of the goat was being cooked with medicine in three pots for those present, the possessed women sat outside on a mat, an honour accorded to their spirits. They sat, silent and dignified, saying nothing. A fowl was killed in order that its leg might afford a medicine bag for the patient and the chips of bark used in smoking were ground to a powder to be used by the patient when eating of the first-fruits. It might be mentioned that the doctor carried home with her the hind leg, shoulder, and breast of the goat as her share, while the other meat was regarded as a reward to the crowd for its share in dancing and singing.

For some time people sat and talked to their friends while the doctor 794
worked with her medicines and the possessed women sat quietly in the 755
shade. Suddenly we became aware of a kind of pantomime in which the 535
initiate, directed in song by the doctor, was made to play-act all the work of women. She went to fetch water and wood about 20 yards from home, swept the courtyard, imitated hoeing, the stamping and winnowing of mealies, cooking and dishing up, finally serving food in the correct manner to the small boy whose mother she had married (Betty had married her father's sister). Last of all she was taken to the drums and

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

shown how to dance in possessed fashion, all, it was said, lest when her spirit left her she should be lazy and not know how to work. Betty walked as in a dream with a wooden, expressionless look and at times appeared so exhausted that we feared she would not be able to lift the stamper when imitating stamping. This mime-show is not performed in all initiations, nor is a goat always killed, for the methods of doctors differ considerably and the patient's relatives may have no goat. Often the patient is set to dance and treated with medicines till she falls down with the spirit upon her.

It was now three o'clock in the afternoon, and, the initiation being complete, the doctor thought it time that the spirits departed. She ushered the possessed into the hut, where they all sat down, offered them each a pinch of snuff; took a rattle and began her farewell song, the whole company (for the hut had filled with spectators) joining in the refrain. Next the initiate sang her farewell song, mentioning what she wanted as her accessories—several white cloths, a woollen cap, and a spear to hold when dancing. When all had finished singing, they took off their *zwiṭhamo* (clothes), which their attendants (for each possessed person has some one to help him when his spirit appears) put into bundles to take away, and lay down to sleep. After three minutes the doctor grunted and groaned as departing spirits are apt to do, sat up and began dressing in everyday clothes. The others followed her example and went outside. The patient, but a short while before so exhausted, came smiling out of the hut and scolded the people for letting her oversleep in this shocking manner (appearing to have no knowledge of her initiation). Then all washed their faces and urinated in the hedge, as women do on rising in the mornings.

Initiation into the cult is said to make the person well again, and all into whose history one inquires claim to have been cured. Betty herself had no further trouble. If, however, they become ill again, it may be a second spirit, for many people have three or four. There is, however, no further initiation; the second spirit is merely called upon to manifest itself. A second or third spirit may take possession without causing any illness, merely announcing its arrival and making known its wants when the person is possessed. After initiation the spirit manifests itself when it has some complaint or desire, when the person has broken some taboo, or when specially induced by dancing or prayer. A possessed person has to keep certain taboos: he may never eat such firstfruits as pumpkin leaves or green mealies, *morula* fruits or beer made of the newly-harvested corn without medicine given him at his initiation and renewable every year or every two years; any new thing undertaken, as when a possessed woman becomes pregnant, must be reported to the spirit. Some *malɔpɔ* may not be beaten with a green stick, lest the spirit descend upon them; others may not touch European medicine. Many of them run away from Europeans even when not actually possessed, and one man had to keep his books securely locked in a suit-case lest his wife should see them and become troubled by her spirit. The very mention of the word *lelɔpɔ* in the presence of some may cause the spirit to come. Observances are not the same for all and taboos to be observed depend largely on the doctor who

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

does the initiation. There are no special burial rites associated with the cult. There is, however, a vague belief that injury to a snake in the village may in some cases harm a possessed person, an interesting belief in view of the fact that there is so little trace in Lovedu religion of the Zulu idea that ancestral spirits manifest themselves in snakes.

There is a special relationship between a possessed person and the doctor who initiated him: every year when the medicine needs renewal, beer or *morula* cider is prepared, the doctor, who comes with a number of disciples and attendants, is called and there is a great dance of the possessed often lasting several days. This is 'dancing for medicine' (*hu vintla tshidi*). Some possessed people have to be specially doctored before drinking the first *morula* cider and the *morula* season is always a time of *lelɔpɔ* gatherings; others are required to contribute corn at harvest time for a large *lelɔpɔ* dance at the home of the doctor. These gatherings, at which a goat may be slaughtered in addition to the cider provided, add greatly to the prestige of the doctor. There is sometimes considerable jealousy between *malɔpɔ* doctors, who, with those initiated by them, may form rival schools. Some doctors refuse to allow their followers to dance with those initiated by other doctors without special permission. At one seance, at which there had been some unpleasantness, the doctor smeared some powder into incisions on the neck, tongue, crown, and sides of the heads of her disciples. Then, taking some medicated water in her mouth, she squirted (*hu phasa*), saying, 'I "place" you. Don't you dance any more. I don't like dancing every day without my special permission. Any *lelɔpɔ* who dances where you are dancing will break her leg or be badly hurt.' The remainder of the water was given them to drink.

An interesting feature of the cult of possession is that many people when the spirit is upon them speak in a foreign tongue, said to be Thɔvɔlɔ or Kharanga. Investigation into this matter, however, shows that this is not as startling a phenomenon as it might appear. When possessed, a person for the most part sits silent unless he is a doctor. If he speaks at all, this is in monosyllables, for all his wants and messages are conveyed in song. *Lelɔpɔ* songs are stereotyped and known to many because the uninitiated have to join in the refrain when rattling the accompaniment. In these songs there is usually a number of foreign words, though many consist purely of meaningless sounds, such as '*We le wee eva o wee wee wee wana wee*'. Often peculiarities in the pronunciation of vowels are interpreted as Thɔvɔlɔ. When the refrain begun (*hu suma*) by the possessed person has been taken up by the chorus, he continues with the song or interpolates his own words, usually Sotho with a few foreign words interspersed, till he wishes to stop. In this way he makes known his wishes. It quite frequently happens that no one understands the gibberish of the possessed person, and doctors generally have an attendant who interprets what they wish to convey. There are, however, numerous well-known words in general use by people when their spirit is upon them—for instance, *mufoto* or *movoto* for *lefɔla* (snuff), *bula* or *mvula* for *meetse* (water), *va ga mbaya* for *va ga ntiya* (they may beat me), *kaya* for *hae* (home). But many possessed people speak pure Sotho, and it is recognized that a newly initiated person may not

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

CHAPTER XV

THE RAIN CULT

The rain-queen in her sphere of safeguarding the seasons—technique of transforming the clouds—evils that cause 'heat' and act as impediments to rain—'cooling' rites counteracting the 'heat' of the earth.

As the centre of the agricultural cycle, rain is the focus of many human interests; as the elixir of life, it is one of the ultimate bases of man's sense of security; and as a manifestation of celestial grace, it is the supreme justification of the divine right of the queen to rule. The queen is primarily not a ruler, but a rain-maker, and men rely for their security, not on regimentation, armies, and organization, but on the queen's power to make rain for the tribe and to withhold rain from its enemies. All ultimate reliances are based upon the magico-religious world, and rain-making and its cult are an important part of that world. The rain cult is not composed of a few magical passes made by the queen; it is a whole complex of institutions with ramifications through many aspects of tribal life. The cult is not confined to measures taken to secure rain in times of drought; its observances must be kept at all times and a good year involves as much care on the part of the queen as a bad one.

The chief actor in the rain cult is the queen. During life, she is not merely the Transformer of the Clouds, but she is regarded as the changer of the seasons and guarantor of their cyclic regularity; when she dies, the seasons are out of joint and drought is inevitable. Her very emotions affect the rain: if she is dissatisfied, angry, or sad, she cannot work well, and in 1934–5, when the first rains did not come till December, the drought was attributed to her being upset at her daughter's liaison with a commoner. Her rain-making is not confined to dramatic ceremonies in time of severe drought; it is conceived of as continuous care throughout the summer. Furthermore, the Lovedu do not attribute every fall of rain to some special activity or volition on the part of their queen, but rather believe that the queen exercises some general control or care which ensures a good season.

Such being the powers of the queen, she is the person to be approached when there is no rain, not only at the beginning of the season, but any time during the summer in a country in which three weeks' drought might ruin the maize crop. There are various ways of doing this. Great councillors or important relatives may approach the queen in person, saying, 'The people are crying,' and asking her to help them. When there was no rain, Mugwena, related to the queen through his mother, used to walk near the queen's hut complaining, in a voice calculated to reach the royal ears, that it was a bad thing for the chief to kill his people by withholding rain. When the first summer storm of 1937 opened with much lightning and thunder, the two chief councillors mentioned informally to the queen at beer that they hoped she would ward off wind and thunder and give them a good year. Heads of districts approach the queen (*ku loea*) with a gift, usually nowadays of £1 or £1 10*s*., and very often

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

643 789 538 821 bring with them in addition dancing performers (*gɔsha*) to please her and to evoke her pity at the sorrowful sight of people dancing in summer when they ought to be ploughing. The movements of this dancing do not differ from those of ordinary dancing, but the music consists of *lesugu* songs sung also at the annual harvest ceremony, on the death of important royal people, and at the girls' initiation 'school'.

643 789 535 833 821 The most renowned of all dancing for rain is the *legɔbathɬe*, a special kind of *gɔsha*, the mourning dance of a section of Thɔvɔlɔ people living under one of the district heads, Mavulana. It is more dignified, its movements slower and more stately, and its drumming more subdued than in an ordinary *gɔsha*. So lightly are the drums struck that the clear, silvery, varied tones of the reed pipes ring out like the peal of bells. Only two drums are used, and none but those who have lost at least one parent may perform, and it is begun in the dim light of the dawn before sunrise, when, after a short spell, it stops and is resumed later in the day. When some one person has greatly angered the queen, and drought is believed to be due to her displeasure on this account, the married women from all the villages in the royal neighbourhood assemble every morning after cooking to dance, singing, 'We are being killed on account of a bogyman in skins' (*re vulaiwa gi Madikadyana di vɬɬvɬɑana*). Grandmothers nurse the babies and encourage the younger women with their trillings and dancing movements. The dust rises high and by sunset they are black with dirt and sweat; but next day and the next they come again, sometimes for as long as a week, till rain falls or continued drought makes it clear that some other cause is operating as well. The great hardship this dancing entails (for nursing mothers who perform have no time to feed their babies) is thought to melt the heart of the queen. Too much rain, as well as too little, is laid at the door of the queen. On one occasion, when it had rained almost incessantly for six weeks, the chief councillor said in the presence of the queen, 'Fat does not fill the pot' (*makhura a a ɑale bija*), meaning that there can be too much of a good thing—a hint to the queen to regulate things better.

643 789 821 There is no belief that is stronger in the tribe even to-day than that in the power of the queen to transform the clouds. This does not, however, mean that they do not recognize the regularity of the seasons. People know that the month of February is generally the rainiest in the year; that the month *Morenane* (October), when the Southern Cross sets just before bedtime, is the time when the first rains are approaching, and no one would *lova* rain in winter any more than Europeans would organize a day of prayer for rain in that season. Yet if rain does not come at its proper time or the season is generally bad, it may be said, 'The queen has not changed the hoeing season [i.e. the year] nicely' (*a va fedula ledzema ha vutse*); for if the cycle of seasons is considered inevitable, whether the new year is brought in propitiously or otherwise is in the hands of the queen.

643 791 Though renowned as the greatest rain-maker in South Africa, Mujaji never works alone. She always has a rain-doctor, of whom there are many in the tribe, to work with her. She chooses any renowned doctor, but may change him for another if people complain that the rain is bad—

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

is very difficult to obtain any expression of opinion concerning the relative merits of things we quite naturally compare, such as objects of craftsmanship, achievements of individuals, or other elements of culture. They do not share our interest in analysing out parts of a culture complex in order to compare them, and they generally regard the complexes—for instance, two different types of dance—as wholes incommensurable with one another. Of course, they do compare things, but as regards economic goods they are chiefly concerned to be favoured equally with others. 'What are you stinting me of?' is a common phrase implying, 'Am I not, equally with others, entitled to share in your generosity?' A child, asking us for sweets, often says, 'Give me *also*', for he is begging for what others may receive, not a special advantage for himself. When favours are asked from the ancestors, the prayer is quite often phrased in such terms as 'Give us *also*' or 'Let us have health *like others*'. When a son had just been initiated as a doctor, his father prayed simply, 'Let him also be able to heal nicely,' and when a son was ill in town, the words, despite the competitiveness of town conditions, were 'We say, let him be "cool", Mother, and in his work let him be like others.' To stress, before the ancestors, a desire for personal achievement in competition with, or greater than that of, others is evidently improper.

Competition is not always eliminated. Doctors are not conceived to be rivals for a limited clientele, but they are said to 'try' one another: cultural definition diverts attention from the objective social situation of a limited number of customers, in which competition is discouraged, to the magical sphere, in which the fantasy of competitive strife is permitted. But the most striking arrangement that limits competition is the socially recognized, albeit not rigidly prescribed, hierarchy which defines men's status according to seniority or rank. 'Robes may be passed on [to strangers], never royal rank'; or, again, 'What becomes worn by age is clothes, not noble rank', because a nobleman can never lose caste or position. Younger brothers are taught to defer to their elder brothers, and in spite of displacements of district heads, it is hardly conceivable that commoners can oust royal relatives. Where the rivalry is fiercest, as among councillors at the capital, it is part of an institutional conflict and may not be openly displayed.

Dancing and music relieve the monotony of life, there is adventure in illegitimate sex relations and in the outlawed activity of witchcraft, but it is beer which provides the predominant recreation. Both beer and dancing belong to the co-operative, reciprocity pattern, whereas witchcraft is essentially competitive and anti-social. Unlike the Shangana-Tonga, the Lovedu dislike display in dancing, except in the esoteric dancing of initiation and the individualistic dancing of adherents of the alien cult of possession. Dancing, like beer, has other than recreational significance, and it is the manner in which beer has been integrated with diverse aspects of the culture that we may profitably consider.

Beer is the humanly satisfying element, even the justification of many actions; it is a recognized means of maintaining prestige and hence of achievement; and, as the medium of goodwill exchanges, it also subserves [illegible]. No occasion, whether social or ritual or religious or economic,

3: Krige E-5 (1928-1938)1938 FX14 Lovedu FX14
South African Natives FX5

i.e., telling the medicine, without any set phraseology, what to do, is important. Day wizards are chiefly men and it is said that, owing to the facility of obtaining bad medicine in towns and from foreign tribes to-day, this type of witchcraft has greatly increased.

In everyday life, however, a person is called a witch, whatever methods he has used, and in an accusation of witchcraft there is never any discussion whether the culprit is a day or night wizard. Moreover, there is in the minds of ordinary people considerable confusion about the type of witchcraft associated with each class, and it is possible to live among Lowveld people a long time without coming upon these distinctions. The night wizard is thus in Evans-Pritchard's terminology the witch, the day wizard the sorcerer; and the great distinction between sorcery and legitimate magic lies not in method but in intention.

SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF BEER AND THE DANCE. It would be a mistake in discussing the main features of Lowveld society to leave out of count the social importance of beer and the use of the dance or *gosha* as a social institution, though neither is confined to these tribes. Beer, apart from its religious value, plays a part in social and economic life. It is continually being carried from one group to another, acting as a bond between people and establishing friendly relations. In the Lowveld, in contrast to the Highveld, it is still of greater importance than money; while people may refuse to attend working parties for money, they will flock to one where beer is served. The *gosha* is a dance in which women do the drumming while men playing reed pipes dance in a circle round the drums. It is, however, much more than a dance. It is an institution for maintaining friendship and reciprocity between groups, a way of showing sympathy on the death of a relative and the means by which subjects approach their chief for rain in time of drought. A *gosha* is often sent by one chief to another in the Northern Transvaal.

SOME COMPARISONS BETWEEN LOBEDU CULTURE AND THAT OF OTHER AREAS. The Lobedu culture complex represents a close blending of two cultures, that of the Lobedu who came south from somewhere in Rhodesia when the empire of Monomotapa was breaking up, bringing